

increasingly invested in clock consciousness. Nor is it clear what to make of the fact that, as the author's own anecdotes reveal, personal timepieces were highly unreliable. To what extent did the owner of a frequently broken watch trust that watch to tell the correct time? Finally, more attention to Alexis McCrossen's work on the Sabbath in *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday* (2000) could have helped the author contextualize the ongoing tension between battle time and God's time on Sundays. Overall, however, this study makes a notable contribution to the study of the social history of the Civil War and temporal perception in the nineteenth century.

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*The Name Game: Cultural Modernization & First Names.* By Jürgen Gerhards (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2005. viii plus 142 pp.).

Which rules and predispositions guide our thinking when we select the first names for our children? In German kindergartens today international and formerly rarely heard names abound: Joaquin and Celine, Cecil and Vivienne, Carlos and Tessa. What happened to Wilhelm and Heinrich, Erna and Berta, and countless other names popular before World War Two? When we name our children, we attach very specific meanings and messages to them, meanings that are framed by personal experience, social conventions, historical cycles, cultural vogues and political Weltanschauungen. Focusing on the case of Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth century (as exemplified in two German towns, Grimma and Gerolstein), Jürgen Gerhards seeks to retrace these predispositions with a particular eye on their sociological implications. While the author rejects the "cultural turn," he employs tools of sociology and scientific-theoretical logic, above all, theories of cultural modernization and cultural sociology as outlined in the work of Emile Durkheim.

Gerhards believes that first names provide a valuable indicator for cultural change during the past two hundred years. In the nineteenth and early century, he argues, religion, nation and the family collectively formed the "traditional ligatures of the creation of meaning and the structuring of behavior" (p. 119). Children often received the names of saints such as Elisabeth or Johann, saints whose fate and behavior was hoped to provide a guiding post for people's offspring. The name of family ancestors likewise served as a pool from which to draw first names in an effort to remember and immortalize parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and godparents.

Germany's secularization and modernization in the late nineteenth century caused a marked change in the politics of naming. Both processes improved people's living standards, lessened their needs for spiritual orientation and, with that, their belief in God-given commandments. The rise of the nation state provided new role models and names influencing the name process: Wilhelm, Friedrich, Günther, Margareth, Gisela and Frieda now became popular names—and Gerhards stresses that due to their alliance with the nation-state, Protestants retreated from Christian names much earlier than Catholics did.

A major breakthrough in the politics of naming occurred after World War Two when in the face of Germany's surrender and subsequent division family, religion and nationalism vanished as popular reference points. Citing Ralf Dahrendorf, Georg Simmel and Ulrich Beck, Gerhards argues that beginning in 1945, a process of individual emancipation took place, marked by increasing individuation. As a concept attached to modernization, individuation connotes a state in which people share a decreasing amount of characteristics and are willingly seeking to become different from one each others. Such differences may be expressed in architecture, clothes, personal style—and names. It is after World War Two that the notion of a rare and distinctive name emerges as a desirable goal for parents when naming their newborns. In 1894, still 34 names were different. One hundred years later, the number had risen to 81 percent. As a result, Germans increasingly rejected "German" names and opted, instead, for foreign names from the Western sphere, above all from the Romance and Anglo-American regions.

There are two striking observations in this context: first, East German parents seem to have made the same name choices as their counterparts in the West: names like Mandy and Kevin proved to be equally popular on both sides of the Iron Curtain while Slavic names enjoyed no such success: "From the standpoint of first names," Gerhards muses, "the attempt to integrate the German Democratic Republic into the Eastern bloc was a complete failure. East German citizens looked westward for their monikers" (p. 120). Next to the collapse and division of Germany, Gerhards cites the media, music, and the Americanization of European culture as reasons for the transnationalization and expansion of names available to German parents. Not tradition but fashion now became the principal guiding posts for parents who named their offspring. Still, these parents often proved less experimental than one might think: the selection of names often operated on the basis of phonetic similarities with native names (Christian simply converted into Christopher or Chris while Stefan became Steve).

Second, parents' willingness to look for novel names was much more explicit when their babies were girls. Boys' names continued to be more traditional than girls' names. The reason for this divergence, Gerhards believes, is that parents were more concerned about their daughter's future and identity in a world of women's liberation. At the same time, however, the function of names as a sex classifier and the "unambiguity" of phonetic markers for both sexes have remained safely in place, as did parental efforts to seek religious names for their daughters. For every Peter there was an Elisabeth, for every Ulrich a Maria.

One wonders about these distinctions, though. What, precisely, are the criteria for "German" or "religious" names? Where are the lines between those two categories? Moreover, if parents select names from these categories, does that mean their decision for a genre is conscious? Gerhards' own interviews with mothers' of newborns in German hospitals reveal that parents often remain clueless as to why they like and prefer certain names. Gerhards believes that "society's impact is decisive even when people are unaware of it" (p. 123). But what is the significance of these categories if parents act subconsciously? The only conscious category the author admits is the most recent one—fashion—but it seems one need to ask why certain names become fashionable and others do not. Religious and traditional names can be fashionable, too, and even if par-

ents reject the underlying notions these names still have a genesis, a value and a story to tell. Certainly, the fact that after reunification traditional and religious names for both genders have become “fashionable” again (currently, the name Eliah Gabriel counts among the most popular boys’ names) points to a social reorientation incompatible with the theory of Anglo-American cultural imperialism advanced by Gerhards. Finally, for all his dedication to sociological theory Gerhards’ cause and effect analysis may seem disputable to the historically oriented reader. The author frequently cites a historical fact—decline of family structures, rise of nationalism, end of World War Two—then looks at the development of first names to conclude that one necessarily frames the other. One needs to remember that there is a fine line between plausibility and evidence, particular if we agree with the notion that parents as reasonable subjects have little agency in this tale.

Nonetheless, these are minor criticisms for this is an enormously interesting and thought-provoking book. Next to historians of Germany and social theory, anybody who has children (and worried about naming them) will find countless nuggets of inspiration in this volume.

Jessica Gienow-Hecht

*Pets in America: A History.* By Katherine C. Grier (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. vii plus 377 pp. \$34.95).

Americans are voracious pet-keepers. Three-fifths of American households have a pet, and nearly half own two or more. Americans keep nearly 17 million birds, 91 million cats, 74 million dogs, 139 million freshwater fish, 10 million saltwater fish, 11 million reptiles, and 18 million other small animals, spending more than \$34 billion annually on pet products and veterinary services, twice the amount in 1994.

Katherine C. Grier’s remarkably well-written, richly researched study draws on a wealth of diaries, letters, business records, iconographic evidence, and other sources to provide the first comprehensive history of pet keeping in the United States. Readers will learn that pet keeping is not a new phenomenon: Cats and dogs accompanied Europeans to the American colonies not only as work animals but as companions. By the mid-eighteenth century, colonists had begun to keep birds and rabbits in their homes. Readers will also learn about the shifting popularity of various kinds of pets, as well as the evolution of the pet supply and wholesale animal business.

Grier has done an extraordinary job of reconstructing the chronology of pet keeping. We discover that cats were called Puss and parrots Polly as early as the sixteenth century; the international bird trade began in the 1840s; the first packaged pet foods and commercial medicines also appeared in that decade; an aquarium craze took place in the 1850s; and the first dog show took place in the 1860s. Pet toys became popular during the 1920s, and surgical spaying of pets only became common during the 1930s. Especially interesting is Grier’s discussion of the proliferation of breeds of dogs and cats. It is noteworthy that

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